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TAGS: OPRC KMDR FR

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAN IRAQ

PARIS - THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

IRAQ  
IRAN

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

DOMESTIC STORIES DOMINATE TODAY'S FRONT PAGES EXCEPT FOR THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PRESS, WHICH DEVOTES ITS FRONT PAGES TO THE RISING PRICE OF OIL, (LA TRIBUNE) WHICH, ACCORDING TO LES ECHOS, " HAS NOT DENTED THE CONFIDENCE OF WORLD MARKETS DUE TO "PRESIDENT BUSH'S OPTIMISM." RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO EQUALLY DEVOTES ITS EDITORIAL TO AN ECONOMIC MATTER: TITLED "CHINA, THE YUAN AND US," THE EDITORIAL COMMENTS: "CHINA HAS HAD AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE U.S. FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS. IN EXCHANGE OF A STABLE YUAN, MASSIVE CHINESE INVESTMENTS HAVE TRAVELED TO WALL STREET TO BUY AMERICAN BONDS, THUS FILLING THE GAP OF AMERICA'S DEFICIT. IT IS PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF THESE CHINESE INVESTMENTS THAT BUSH'S ADMINISTRATION WAS ABLE TO FINANCE THE WAR IN IRAQ WITHOUT EFFECTING U.S. CREDIT RATES."

IRAQ AND SECRETARY RUMSFELD'S COMMENTS ON IRAN PROVIDING SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS TO IRAQ ARE REPORTED IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR AND LE FIGARO. FRANCE SOIR QUOTES CNRS EXPERT AZADEH KHIAN-THIEBAUT: "IT IS NOT IN THE IRANIANS' INTEREST TO HELP THE IRAQI GUERRILLA." "UNLESS OF COURSE," ADDS FRANCE SOIR, "WITH THE NUCLEAR CRISIS BETWEEN IRAN AND THE WEST, THE IRANIANS ARE EAGER TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE U.S. ABOUT THE MEANS THEY HAVE AT THEIR DISPOSAL IN IRAQ." IN REGIONAL OUEST FRANCE THE EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON AMERICA'S "CHANGING MOOD" OVER AMERICA'S INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ, AND WASHINGTON'S TALK OF A PARTIAL PULLOUT, "PARADOXICALLY JUST WHEN COUNTRIES SUCH AS FRANCE ARE DEMONSTRATING THEIR SUPPORT TO WASHINGTON." (SEE PART C)

LE FIGARO ENTITLES AN ARTICLE: "IRAQI LAWYERS DISCOURAGED BY NON-RESPECT OF THE LAW." THE ARTICLE STATES IRAQ IS A "SEMI-SOVEREIGN" COUNTRY OCCUPIED BY FOREIGN TROOPS "WHO, ACCORDING TO A COUPLE OF IRAQI LAWYERS, HAVE RAIDED THEIR LAW OFFICES." THE U.S. MILITARY IS REPORTED AS HAVING DENIED THE CHARGES.

IRAN AND THE NUCLEAR CRISIS REMAIN TODAY'S MAJOR INTERNATIONAL STORIES. LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE IN ITS EDITORIAL ADOPTS A CRITICAL STANCE VIS-A-VIS THE EUROPEANS WHO APPEAR "UNABLE TO READ TEHRAN'S DIPLOMATIC MESSAGE." SEVERAL ARTICLES POINT TO THE DIVISIONS AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE IAEA AS WELL AS TO WASHINGTON'S SUPPORT OF THE EUROPEAN EFFORT. (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAQ

"GETTING OUT OF THE IRAQI QUAGMIRE"  
JULIEN REDON IN REGIONAL OUEST FRANCE (08/11): "SOMETHING IS PROBABLY CHANGING IN AMERICA'S PERCEPTION OF THE WAR IN IRAQ. FOR A LONG TIME THE AMERICANS STOOD TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, CONVINCED FOR THE MOST PART THEY WERE RIGHT. BUT AS THIS BELIEF BEGINS TO WAVER, IT HAS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT FOR THOSE IN POWER TO UPHOLD A MARTIAL STANCE. AND THIS IS WHY WASHINGTON IS BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF A PARTIAL PULLOUT. PARADOXICALLY, THIS IS TAKING PLACE JUST WHEN, ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE, THOSE WHO WERE THE MOST HOSTILE TO THE U.S. INTERVENTION, AMONG THEM FRANCE, ARE SHOWING AN EAGERNESS TO HELP WASHINGTON GET OUT OF THE QUAGMIRE. THEY HAVE PROBABLY COME TO REALIZE THAT AN OUTRIGHT U.S. PULLOUT FROM IRAQ WOULD BE EVEN MORE PERILOUS, AND NOT ONLY FOR THE U.S."

IRAN

"WASHINGTON ENCOURAGES EUROPEAN EFFORTS"  
GUILMETTE FAURE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/11):  
"PRESIDENT BUSH ACKNOWLEDGED HE REMAINS SUSPICIOUS ABOUT IRAN'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS. HE HAS ADOPTED A DISTANT BUT WATCHFUL ATTITUDE, LOOKING OVER THE SHOULDERS OF THE EUROPEANS TO SEE WHAT IS BEING DISCUSSED AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.  
DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE FROM HIS TEXAS RANCH, PRESIDENT BUSH

DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ERASE ANY LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT THE WHITE HOUSE'S SUPPORT OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORT IN THE IRANIAN CRISIS. IF THE IRANIANS WERE TO PERSIST IN THEIR ATTITUDE, PRESIDENT BUSH MADE IT CLEAR THE ANSWER WOULD BE A CONCERTED RESPONSE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE EUROPEANS."

"IRAN'S AMBITIONS" LEFT-OF-CENTER *LE MONDE* IN ITS UNSIGNED EDITORIAL (08/11): "AT FIRST GLANCE THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND IRAN CAN APPEAR COMPLEX AND FULL OF UPSETS. BUT IN REALITY IT IS SIMPLE AND POINTS TO A SINGLE TRUTH: IRAN'S AMBITION TO GET ITS HANDS ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS. FOR YEARS, IRAN HAS PURSUED THIS GOAL WHILE DENYING IT. THIS WAS IRAN'S AMBITION UNDER THE SHAH; IT REMAINS IRAN'S AMBITION UNDER THE MULLAHS. IN SPITE OF NUMEROUS OBSTACLES, THE IRANIANS HAVE NOT ABANDONED THEIR QUEST. IRAN IS CONVINCED THAT COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES ARE THE ONLY WEAPONS THAT CAN BALANCE THE PRESSURE FROM ITS REGIONAL NEIGHBORS WHERE AMERICAN BASES HAVE BEEN SPROUTING. IN ADDITION, THREE NEW NUCLEAR STATES HAVE EMERGED IN THIS UNSTABLE REGION: INDIA, PAKISTAN AND ISRAEL, IRAN'S DECLARED ENEMY, WHICH IT HAS SWORN TO DESTROY. FACED WITH IRAN'S DETERMINATION AND THE SUBTLETY OF ITS DIPLOMACY, APT TO BLOW HOT AND COLD, EUROPE IS STAMMERING. SUFFERING FROM MYOPIA, IT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO DECIPHER THE HARDENING POPULIST STANCE OF IRAN AFTER ITS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. EUROPE EXPECTED RAFSANJANI BUT HAS HAD TO MAKE DO WITH THE ULTRACONSERVATIVE AHMADINEJAD. DEAF, EUROPE IS INCAPABLE OF DECODING AND ANTICIPATING TEHRAN'S MESSAGES. THE TROIKA, WHICH IS NOW OPENLY SUPPORTED BY WASHINGTON, CONTINUES TO BET ON THE VIRTUES OF DIPLOMACY. INDEED THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION, OTHER THAN A DANGEROUS POLITICAL ESCALATION AND AS A LAST RESORT A MILITARY ESCALATION." HOFMANN